99C-105
Panel B

Executive Summary

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Bioaccumulated toxic contaminants, such as selenium, in water and sediment can impair ecosystem function in the San Joaquin River, the Delta, and the San Francisco Bay ecosystems. Westside San Joaquin tributaries, primarily the Panoche/Silver Creek Watershed (PSCW), are known to convey substantial amounts of contaminants, including selenium, sediment, and salts to the these ecosystems.

The Westside Resource Conservation District (WRCD) and the Panoche/Silver Creek Coordinated Resource Management and Planning Group (CRMP) recognize that better upper watershed management can improve habitat and water quality downstream and while yielding other secondary benefits as well. The following proposed project will build upon the successfully completed PSCW Assessment. This proposed project will be implemented through the CRMP process and will involve integrating information developed in the proposed project with information from other recent and concurrent projects. This integration of information will evolve the Panoche/Silver Creek Coordinated Resource Management Plan into a blueprint for implementation of adaptive management programs in the watershed.

Project activities will include continued coordination of CRMP member agencies, private interests, and watershed landowners. The project will involve detailed technical evaluation of BMPs recommended in the PSCW Assessment for the management of erosion and reduction of the sediment and contaminant load delivered from the upper watershed during high flow events. BMPs will be evaluated for cost, feasibility, siting, and effectiveness. Conceptual designs will be developed and selected BMPs will be installed at test sites throughout the upper watershed. Some BMPs will not be tested in the field, such as upper watershed flow retention structures; however, engineering evaluations through model simulations will be performed to investigate their feasibility and effectiveness.

Integral to this project, is the three-year monitoring program which will be developed to assess the effectiveness of field-tested BMPs for achieving the goals of reducing sediment and contaminant loads leaving the watershed while measuring indicators of secondary ecological benefits as well. The monitoring portion of the project will dovetail with a project proposed by the Lawrence Berkeley Laboratory regarding real-time forecasting of contaminant loading from the PSCW to the San Joaquin River. The project will include a detailed evaluation of monitoring data.

The results of BMP testing will be integrated with the results of other recent and concurrent projects, including the Bureau of Reclamation's Panoche Creek Corridor project, the Bureau of Land Management's Panoche Creek Non-native plant management program, and the CRMP's coordination with the California Department of Fish and Game and landowners to develop a creek maintenance permit on Panoche Creek from the I-5 bridge and Belmont Avenue. The CRMP will use this compiled information to develop a Watershed "Action Plan" for the established Coordinated Resource and Management Plan that will provide working, flexible guidance and conceptual designs to plan and implement future watershed management actions.